

Washington, D.C. - Political campaigns will not be able to make pre-recorded calls in the late evening and will have to clearly identify themselves at the start of a call under a bill introduced late Wednesday by Congresswoman Melissa Bean (IL-08) and House colleagues.

The Robocall Privacy Act (H.R. 5747), introduced by Rep. Zoe Lofgren (CA-16), the chair of the Committee on House Administration's Subcommittee on Elections, along with Bean, Rep. John Campbell (CA-48) and Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ-7), mirrors a companion bill introduced in the Senate by Sen. Diane Feinstein of California. The bill would reign in the worst excesses of political robocalls by:

- Prohibiting robocalls between 9 p.m. and 8 a.m.
- Prohibiting more than two calls per day to the same phone number from the same candidate, party, or interest group.
- Requiring the sponsor of the call to be clearly identified at the beginning of the call.
- Requiring that the accurate phone number be displayed on voter's caller I.D.

The bill would apply to candidates in federal elections. It would be enforced through the Federal Election Commission with fines of \$1,000 per violation.

"Pre-recorded phone messages, or 'robocalls' can be a useful method in communicating with constituents and voters, but they can also be used to deceive and confuse them, or worse, to deliberately suppress voter participation," Bean said. "Informing voters about candidates' positions can help our democratic process, but people shouldn't be harassed by calls at obscene hours of the night. And voters should be told, up front, who is actually calling them."

Bean previously testified on the issue before the Committee on House Administration's Subcommittee on Elections.

"During the last few years, it has become clear that misuse of robocalls has continued to escalate," noted Rep. Lofgren. "This bill, which addresses the most abusive practices, is a good first step in helping to curb that escalation. Importantly, this bill is not an absolute ban on the

use of robocalls. I understand and respect the importance of the First Amendment's protection of political speech and the benefits of robocalls when used responsibly. This legislation ensures that political robocalls are used in a way that promotes, rather than discourages, meaningful participation by all Americans in the political process."

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